

Religious Experience as a Ground for Belief: An Investigation into its Verticality and Implications

Sofia Navarro

University of Paris-Sorbonne, France

Abstract: Religious experience has been considered central to belief in a divine entity and has influenced personal faith and religion in various cultures. This paper discusses the nature, epistemic standing, and consequences of the religious experience with regard to its verticality—whether such experiences actually refer to an external and transcendent reality. William James’ typology of mystic experiences, Alvin Plantinga’s idea of properly basic beliefs, and Richard Swinburne’s Principle of Credulity provide some support to claim religious experience as a source of belief. On the other hand, there are difficulties posed by psychological and neurological theories, cultural differences, and the problem of competing religions. The paper also focuses on the other aspects of religious experience including ethics, social activism, and relations between different faiths. Even though religious experience fails to most often give proof of the divine, its relevance is striking for it gives meaning to personal life on a level and societal discourse on the faith, reason, and spirituality of humanity.

Keywords: Religious Experience (RE), Ground for Beliefs (GFB), Verticality and Implications (V&I)

1. INTRODUCTION

The term religious Experience refers to the personal experience of any individual of encounter with the Divine. There are different types of these experiences such as mystical experiences, numinous experiences, conversation experiences, and others. In mystical experiences, there is a direct encounter with the Divine which is less experienced by any human being. In numinous experience, there is experience of any awe-inspiring presence which is too powerful. In conversation experience, there is a conversation with the Divine and such transformative events can change anyone's belief (Pleket, 1981). If we discuss about verticality of these religious experiences, we will come to know that verticality means the ability to connect individuals with higher reality. There are some important characteristics of the verticality of Religious Experience. The first and most important characteristic is ineffability. It means that there is difficulty in describing these experiences in words because it is beyond the linguistic and cognitive aspects of humanity. The other most important characteristic of the verticality of religious experiences is that these have noetic qualities. These experiences are mostly accompanied by understanding so we can say

that every individual does not have such experiences. It has also been seen that these experiences may have transformative power which means that these are so intense and clear that they can change anyone's values and behaviors as well (Tanyi, 2002). Now we are going to discuss how these religious experiences may serve as intact ground for beliefs. There are many important ways by which these experiences may serve as grounds for beliefs. The first and foremost way is direct experience. In the case of direct experience, we have seen that there is immediate and proper awareness of individuals because personal experience will help them to understand the reality of the Divine. Sometimes it has also been seen that there is intuitive knowing that will lead to understanding as well. Not only these aspects, but it has also been seen that these personal experiences may provide new perspectives and these new perspectives will help in reframing traditional beliefs by providing new insights (Galen, 2012). Some important emotional and psychological aspects are related to these personal experiences. For example, there is emotional resonance after these personal experiences. These personal experiences may stimulate different emotions in individuals such as joy, awe, or peace. All of these aspects will contribute to emotional resonance in these individuals. It has also been seen that these personal experiences may work for psychological healing in individuals so provide them emotional support as well. Some important social and cultural contexts are related to these religious experiences (Cian, 2017). There is a need for community validation in these religious experiences when these are reinforced by a community of believers. In this way, this religious experience will be considered close to reality. The cultural context will also help in providing a proper framework for understanding. Let's suppose we are living in such a modern society where there is no concept of religious experiences, there will be less acceptance of these religious experiences. But if we are living in a religious society, there will be more understanding of these religious experiences (Klassen, 2004). Now if we discuss about important implications of these religious experiences, we may come to know that there is a variety of these implications. Firstly, we are going to discuss personal implications. In the case of religious experiences, there will be transformed lives because of changes in beliefs. Such changes in beliefs will result in changes in behavior. The other important personal implication is that it will help in spiritual growth because there will be a deepened connection between the individual and the Divine after these religious experiences. It has also been seen that these personal experiences may work for providing Peace in times of crisis for individuals so it will

work in emotional healing as well (McCutcheon, 1999). If we discuss about social implications of these religious experiences, we may mention here that these religious experiences will help in community building because there will be a strong bond within the community of believers that will short-term a sense of importance and belonging. As we know every religion focuses on social justice, empathy, and compassion. So, after these personal experiences, there will be betterment in society because society will focus on social justice, empathy, and compassion. The other most important social implication of these religious experiences is that they will help in interfaith understanding. As we know this is the era of pluralistic society in which there are individuals of more than one religion. So there is a need for interfaith understanding to substitute a sense of importance, empathy, and honor there (Smart, 1996). As a result of these religious experiences, there will be betterment in interfaith dialogue as well. Now we are going to understand the philosophical implications of these religious experiences. The most important implication is that it will help in understanding the existence of God because it will provide such evidence which will support the concept of the existence of the Divine. Moreover, there will be better understanding and guidance related to human purpose. It is because, after these religious experiences, there will be a new direction and meaning in life (Meier et al., 2007). There are many important psychological implications of these religious experiences. For example, these religious experiences will help in mental growth because they will improve mental health by alleviating stress, anxiety, and depression. The other important psychological implication can be described in terms of self-actualization because, with the help of religious experiences, there will be the realization of the full potential of any individual that will work for self-actualization. There is a variety of cultural implications of these religious experiences. The most important cultural implication is that these religious experiences will help in cultural preservation because of the conservation of cultural traditions. It will also support rituals and symbolism in religions for a better understanding of human values (Alvis, 2017). The essence of religious experience has always been viewed as a pillar that supports belief in a deity. People and societies have historically pointed to personally and collectively experienced events of the superior reality as rationalization for having faith in a religion. Those supporting the religious experience argument would assert that those encounters, which can be direct or indirect, constitute a relevant reality of a 'divine' being, thus forming one of the most profound epistemic bases for religious belief. However, the validity of this claim is

surrounded by both support and opposition which is skeptical on the trustworthiness, subjectivity, and consequences of religious experience. There are some important challenges to these religious experiences. The first important challenge is that these religious experiences are subjective so it is much difficult to verify or falsify these religious experiences. Secondly, it is dependent upon cultural conditioning whether culture will accept these religious experiences or reject them as well. The next most important challenge is that some critiques say that these kind of experiences are related to psychological conditions instead of any Divine forces or any kind of supernatural forces(Steinbock, 2009).

1.1 Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to understand the importance of religious experiences as a Ground for Beliefs. We have also overviewed about verticality and implications of these religious experiences. These studies have also explained about various important challenges to these religious experiences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies investigates the connection among spiritual conviction & spiritual encounter, drawing out a job toward occasional retention that has been neglected in the epistemological of religious belief. Scholar contends that the conventional approach to addressing the Mental Inquiry disregards the way that spiritual convictions are frequently framed by means of consideration on occasional recollections of recent spiritual encounters. Besides, perceiving this unveils space to gain greater significant headway on responding to the Unwavering Quality Inquiry(Munro, 2024). In this study, researcher examine 2 significant hypothetical obstructions to tracking down transcendental importance in the encounters: an extreme type of subjectivism & a reductionism way to deal with neurology. Along such deterrents tended to, there's space to contemplate in what way mystic encounter & aesthetics might be conveyed toward discourse, an errand worked with via the modern revival of concern in options in contrast to realist transcendentalism & a restored concern in mystic encounter energized by hallucinogenic examination(Marshall, 2022). Studies examine the ramifications toward the endurance speculation of verifiable & multifaceted near-demise experiences, in the entirety of their variety & comparability. On the logical degree, it'll contemplate in what way the

obvious comprehensiveness of near-demise experiences might be been enrolled to help the two endurance & realist speculations. On the transcendental degree, this study will investigate what sort of life following death may be thoughtfully possible whether they somehow happened to acknowledge near-demise experience stories as contemplating certifiable the hereafter encounters — especially provided entire their variety(Shushan, 2024). Scholars investigate the proof in regards to the disunion among genuine & discerned development, direct an efficient survey to decide if investigators recognize among truthful & discerned development, & exhibit 4 potential builds that apparent developments might contemplate. Researchers suggest that analysts be greater unequivocal when view of development is their concentration, decide ideal strategies for surveying such insights, & direct examination on their significance & suggestions(Boals et al., 2023). Studies presumes that there's no abstract note from the spiritualist that may bolt toward assurance of information & it prescribes the characteristics of customary supernatural quality to upgrade comprehension of enchanted encounters & its connected problems related along the modern periods. It'll as well give a more profound esteem & composition of William-james theory for additional Epistemology, Mystical & Spiritual worries(Kizito & Abakare, 2022). Studies explain that mysterious fictionalism's might assist scholars with survey accounts of mysterious encounters as evident regardless of whether the supernatural neglects to be faithful. The methodology makes an eloquent benefit that might help research workers & scholars anxious to purify how they might interpret mysterious encounters & work on hallucinogenic helped therapies. Magical fictionalism's could as well rouse unique ganders at connects of mysterious encounters that could act as go between of their belongings, possibly producing patterns along equivalent illustrative authority that evade the requirement toward a fictionalism's procedure(Garb & Earleywine, 2022). Researchers reveal that spiritual encounter is a case that immediate encounter of the heavenly or Lord is conceivable; it's the conviction that a specific correspondence may occur among human & Lord. This specific conviction has filled in a certain one confirmation toward the truth & presence of Lord. Afterwards investigating the contentions on spiritual encounter & it is effect on the Nigerian' culture, the study presents that a string ought to be haggard among what might be veritable spiritual encounter & its oppressive variant along unique reason for cheating the simple residents that is ethically blameworthy(Obi, 2022). Studies suggest that numerous Evangelists summon regular spiritual encounters — like encounters of heavenly

appearance, direction, & correspondence — as motivations to accept. Not at all like one more well-known motivation to have confidence in Lord (the presence of plan & magnificence in Nature), regular spiritual encounters may uphold convictions regarding an affinitive Lord who's available to him, who directs his vitality, & which addresses him. Regular spiritual encounters are not legitimizations whereas they appear to reason & support such convictions (Launonen, 2024). The focal point of this study is commenced upon the idea that the mixture of neurology & religious philosophy, however conceivable is anyway dangerous; & except if this problem is tackled, it quit the origination of neurophilosophy in uncertainty of its genuineness. The pertinence of this study is vital on the grounds that the incorporeal part of actuality can't be discarded totally toward the bodily idea of metaphysics (Oshinowo, 2023). Studies examines the prospective ramifications of psychism toward the review & quest for religious thriving, along an emphasis on arising logical & philosophic examination on hallucinogens. This thriving requirement not be grasped in a philosophical way, despite the fact that it is, scholar recommend, completely steady with a few naturalist religious structures: the primary objective of the study is to plan the reasonable territory wherein discussions regarding profound prospering, hallucinogens, & psychism could occur at any rate (Ritchie, 2021). Scholars' emphasis is on the kinds of spiritual encounter that could cause free faith in a divinity, explicitly, the immediate impression of the heavenly. the creator calls attention to the generally unbalanced temperament of the proof given by spiritual encounter, that regardless of whether it is adequate toward the matter to accept, this not the slightest bit moves to somebody who gets simple declaration of the encounter (Lorkowski & Lorkowski, 2021). Scholar contends that from the bionomics of eruditions, the possibility that aims, corpse, & substantial & societal conditions are constituent components of their encounter & information, researchers may comprehend the two the veracious, as epitomized & broadened, & pluralist, as basically restricted, essence of spiritual encounters & proficiencies. Scholar presume that the mental significance of any spiritual information suggests clarifications & mediations that, albeit viable along, depart past those of the two different spiritual eruditions & the eruditions of the non-sacrosanct spaces (Morales, 2021). Scholars suggest that learners with creationistic beliefs formed benefits on practically all actions, yet fundamentally failed to meet expectations their correspondents along regular perspectives. For some learners, religionism & theistic evolution contradicts their pondering advancement. This study depicts instructive exercises to assist learners with

understanding their own purposive thinking & sustain learners along creationistic beliefs who're erudition regarding development(Wingert et al., 2023). Studies elaborate that hallucinatory essences inspire strong, spooky cognizant encounters that're remembered to have remedial worth. Researcher contend that hallucinatory claims might be sanely coordinated toward ones' epistemological vitality. 'Thus, refreshing ones' magical convictions in light of modified conditions of cognizance doesn't need to comprise an occasion of epistemological mindlessness(Gładziejewski, 2023). Depiction on contemporary study on literal psychological substance, scholar contend that encounters may have non-abstract substance; that translation should be perceived as conceptuality & that conceptuality surmises a crude psychological substance that isn't gestated. This crude substance isn't capable as non-abstract. Quiet, the non-abstract, unspecified normal center is a deliberation that exhibits itself just over contemplation. In this manner, the presence of a typical center is viable along the way that whole encounters are deciphered(Gäb, 2021). Scholars assert that investigates of the supportive of mysterious ideas perspective might be addressed by means of explaining ideas & perceiving fundamental (however huge) differentiations. What's more, however they award that mysterious ideas might someday be supplanted in the study of hallucinogens, they keep up with that such shouldn't happen based on a lost reasonable evaluate, with no guarantees (they keep up with) the contemporary scrutinize of the supportive of enchanted ideas perspective(Letheby et al., 2024). The study worries mental ways to deal with the Revival of Jesus, explicitly whichever the After-Restoration Christophany & angelophany might be made representationally utilizing a somewhat latest hypothesis of discernment, Prescient Handling. Alongside different more up to date speculations from the brain science of despondency & mental human studies, Prescient Handling can possibly re-strengthen conversation of naturalist ways to deal with the Revival(Baldwin, 2024). Studies claim that in the present profane logical era, religious belief & faith in the presence of Lord are progressively viewed as nonsensical via the individuals who perceive that reasonableness is standardizing. Studies queries such normal insights & endeavors to demonstrate that they're the results of unexplored transcendental suppositions instead of contemplated consideration. It embraces a basic assessment of the connection among sanity & religious belief(Govind Krishnan). In such study, researchers assist to problems fundamental toward the brain research of religious belief & holiness, & advance scholarly points of view that will empower such area to add to brain science

& united areas maximally. Scholars tackle in what way to better conceive the area & direct examination in an undeniably worldwide brain science of religious belief setting. Religious belief, the first word applied to assign such field of brain science, is a social idea & not a mental term; hence, it doesn't hint psychological or plain way of behaving or societal connections (Paloutzian & Park, 2021). Scholars explain that mental writing regarding when occurrences of vocalize earshot ought to be viewed as spiritually curved psychiatry & whenever they ought to be viewed as veritable spiritual encounters will generally surmise that an individual's encounter must be either psychopathic or, more than likely a certified spiritual encounter. This study assesses 3 manners by which the two may be the situation. Depiction on circumstantialist records of psychiatry, scholar will contend for the 3rd perspective & in opposition to the initial 2, highlighting a few peaceful & detached ramifications of this perspective (Scrutton, 2023). This study recommends the routines along what sort of jīva is involved act as erudition systems that assist one with progressively learning & incorporate a specific origination of heavenly actuality, what it resembles to encounter it, & an assumption that certain one will encounter it. As such turn progressively incorporated, they impact ones' discernments & encounters comparative with what sole has realized, making good circumstances toward the rise of encounters that contemplate, basically somewhat, what sole hopes to encounter (Chilcott, 2024). Scholar contends that such speculations act no extra pugnacious operate whereas contrasted with past endeavors to expose spiritual conviction & that such new exposing endeavors are a lot of propelled via systemic responsibilities that're imparted to standard examination. Researcher argue that such factious systems place debunker's especially on an epistemological standard along spiritual defenders: the two backer reactions toward the mental study of religious belief that're principally spurred by strategic responsibilities (Stepanenko, 2021). Studies intended a useful engineering, a numerous passage particular retention framework, that portrays part spawned processes of comprehension that lead to recalling & other abstract peculiarities (such as., information, convictions, feeling, cognizance, Self). Scholar initially examine such methodologies & a few problems they approach & afterward portray a few instructive & proficient encounters that gave chances to research this entrancing epistemic riddle (Johnson, 2024). Studies expects to arrive at a start-up of convictions to locate their particular elements concerning comparable ideas (information, assessment, inclination, insight or expectation, for example). Scholars sum up the greater compelling translations of faith in brain science

& psychopathology, that're chiefly founded on Immanuel-K & scientific way of thinking. Researchers acquaint a smaller understanding with dependably segregate the psychological condition of accepting, that's planned to be employed to observational brain research, neurology, conduct financial matters, social science & associated scientific disciplines(Camina et al., 2021). Studies deciphers Pascal considerations on a recognizable kind of spiritual encounter of temperament & it is epistemic importance. By recognizing suggestion from different feelings of 'evidence', scholar make sense of wherefore, however profoundly huge, that encounters can't assume the part of demonstrating Lord's presence, & the way that they're viable with Lord's concealment. Not either belief in a higher power nor secularism is expected via such record(Avnur, 2024). This paper seeks to address the verticality (authenticity and transcendence) of the religious experience as a foundation for belief while discussing the implications of this interpretation on epistemology, philosophy, and practice.

3. THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

There is a wide variation in the nature, degree, and meaning of religious experiences. In his “The Varieties of Religious Experience,” published in 1902, William James strived to classify religions into different types, such as “mystical experiences,” “conversion experiences,” or “numinous experiences.” Friedrich Schleiermacher referred to religious experience as “feeling of absolute dependence.” Rudolf Otto called it meeting the ‘wholly other,’ which is marked by the mystic phrase *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum* – some sort of deep shock infused with grandeur. Some broad divisions in religious experiences are:

1. Mystical experiences – these are the summits of the individual life, divine encounters for one’s very being, often inexpressible in words.
2. Numinous experiences – these are the instances of recognition of a higher being’s presence which draws a person to deep admiration and praise.
3. Conversion experiences – these are deeply profound changes of religious attitude or change of religion, followed by commitment to the new faith.
4. Communal religious experiences – these gatherings characterized by singing, preaching no particular sermon, teaching, prayer, or testimonies, like in revivals or mass rallies.

The existence of these phenomena in different religions implies a global

aspect of their existence. Their characteristics are, however, different, mostly due to interpretations based on cultures and religions.



Figure 1: Religious Experience as a Justification for Belief

3.1 Religious Experience as a Justification for Belief

Religious experiences are often rooted in the immediate and the transformative. As such, they provide an ‘authenticating’ reasoning and a certainty that cannot be questioned or denied (Figure 1). Alvin Plantinga claims that any religious belief constructed on the basis of experience is deemed as properly basic, which signifies that it is rational without needing justification. While perceptual experiences make a case for the external world, religious experiences make a case about God. In the opinion of philosophers such as Richard Swinburne, the supposition that a person is, in the absence of counterevidence, justified to believe something appears to someone is called the Principle of Credulity. If what is experienced is ‘seeming’ to be God, then one is rationally justified to believe in the existence of God.

4. CHALLENGES TO RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AS EVIDENCE

The fact that it appears self-authenticating in nature, a religious experience does encounter serious epistemological issues:

1. Subjectivity and variability - different religious cultures report different experiences which brings into question whether such experiences have an actual existence or what stems out of cultural conditioning.
2. Neurological and psychological explanations - it is indicated that such experiences are caused by some phenomena within the brain like a seizure in the temporal lobe or taking some drug which clouds their external reality, for such experiences may exist.
3. The problem of conflicting claims - different religions leads to

churning of different opposing experiences e.g., vision of Jesus and Krishna for a Hindu and a Christian respectively, resulting in the question of which experiences, if any, are authentic.



Figure 2: Verticality: Authenticity and Transcendence of Religious Experience

4.1 Verticality: Authenticity and Transcendence of Religious Experience

To review the religious experience concerning its adequacy as a foundational belief, its verticality must be examined – that is, its genuineness and whether it is directed towards a reality beyond itself (Figure 2). Several approaches can be taken:

1. The Phenomenological Method - Studies the experience as it is without engaging in ontological speculation. From this line of inquiry, the religious nature of an experience is valid irrespective of its factual components.

2. Scientific and Empirical Dissent – Some neuroscientific investigations suggest that religious experiences could be an effect of brain activity rather than interaction with a divine being. Michael Persinger's experiments with a so-called "God Helmet" show that artificially stimulating some parts of the brain can lead to so-called mystical experiences.

3. Internal Criticism – Within religious traditions the authenticity of such experiences is often judged against the extent to which they conform to doctrinal teaching and what moral or spiritual consequences they produce.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR BELIEF AND SOCIETY

The result of religious practices is not limited to personal faith, but also touches upon social issues, ethical evaluations, and philosophical matters.

5.1 Strengthening Religious Commitment

Most conversion experiences, like that of St Paul on the road to Damascus, reach culminations which are often doubled with fervent commitment. There are many religious experiences that strengthen faith and commitment. In fact, these serve as anchors in a sea of unfurling existential crises, which gives purpose and meaning to life.

5.2 Theological and Doctrinal Developments

Out of the few definite religions there are, almost all have some fundamental religious experience that incriminates with their theology. Prophetic, mystic and saintly traditions tell us of the secular traditions of religion assuming; during the formative age, the existence of 'heads' like Moses and Muhammad and Buddha as well, facilitated the birth of world religions.

5.3 Social and Ethical Impact

Most of the Repowers had some religious experience through which changes in moral attitude are likely to happen. Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King Jr. started changing religious experiences into social-scientific and humanitarian activities. However, religion also breeds terrorism by giving fanatics for their egotistical violence aimed at persecution and non-exclusionary divinity.

5.4 Interfaith and Pluralistic Considerations

The possibility of validating religious experiences from distinct traditions endorses a more pluralistic approach to religious truth. Rather than having religious experiences as proofs to a single, exclusive truth, a different approach would be to view religious experiences as various interpretations of one supreme reality. This heavily promotes interfaith dialogue and interactions.

5.5 Religious Experience and Science

A relatively new branch of study called neurotheology looks at the link between brain activity and religious experiences. Some people believe that scientific accounts of religious experience reduce its value, whereas others state that naturalistic accounts do not rule out an active divine intervention, just as knowing the physiological processes of vision does not mean that the world does not exist.

6. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE'S VERTICALITY

Religious experience as a basis for believing in the existence of a higher being comes with a distinct set of obstacles. One of these issues is verticality: does the religious experience point to an existing wider cosmos or is it simply a construct of human behavior, psychology, or neurology? For instance, James and Otto argue that such experiences provide authority and insight into the divine which is only possible with their direct engagement. Furthermore, Plantinga suggests in his view of the belief system that if the person goes through a compelling vital experience, then such experience does not need to be justified. Regardless, critics address these claims from many different perspectives. For example, some neuroscientists have shown that religious experiences may be the outcome of some brain functions like stimulating the temporal lobes or taking hallucinogenic drugs. Also, the variation of religious experiences among the followers of different religions raises the problem of competing truths: One person may see Jesus while another sees Krishna. Is it possible for both experiences to be true? This suggests that such problems point to the possibility that religious experiences are culturally conditioned rather than universally indicative of one divine reality.

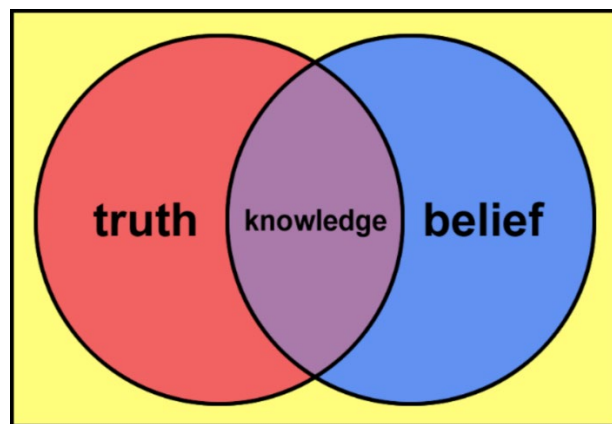


Figure 3: Epistemological and Philosophical Implications

6.1 Epistemological and Philosophical Implications

Considering this problem from an epistemological viewpoint, religious experiences appear rather unique. In their simplest form, they offer personal grounding for justifying one's belief in the world, just as a person would with a phenomenon. Swinburne's Principle of Credulity states that a person who perceives something (for instance, God) is, for all practical purposes, able to believe in it unless there exists strong evidence to the contrary (Figure 3). Religious experience, however, unlike other forms of perception, is not open to verification by independent witnesses which

makes them more susceptible to skepticism. Philosophically, an analysis of religious experiences inevitably has to explore how people claim to possess knowledge about ultimate reality. If genuine, such experiences suggest that knowledge of the divine exists in a profoundly personal form that is not empirically verifiable. On the other hand, if these experiences are purely psychological, they underscore the ability of the mind to create deeply held spiritual social realities with no external reference. Such experiences remain defining aspects of one's identity and life through social as well as ethical lenses, as they have other ontological implications. A number of more social and practical implications stem from the interrelating notions stated, which are far from unimportant. Some of the most powerful individuals throughout history, from prophets to reformers for example, have been nourished and sustained by such experiences; for St. Paul, Rumi, Martin Luther King, and many others, it was their religious experiences that nourished and sustained them to engage with social matters and change the world. However, such experiences have also caused extremism where believers assume God's orders to commit the most dreadful acts of violence. Thus, it is of utmost importance to interpret religious experiences under ethical guidelines. Furthermore, the experience of religion aids in interreligious dialogue. If such experiences appear to occur in different cultures and traditions, they perhaps suggest a universal spiritual reality as opposed to religious truths which are exclusive. Pluralistic forms of religious experiences help bridge the gap of misunderstanding and intolerance between different religions, substitute a peaceful multicultural society. The religious experience is, and will remain, complex and very personal, for it will serve as a defense for belief and the target of philosophical and scientific inquiry. Whether taken as actual encounters with the divine or as mere psychological phenomena, these experiences have a profound impact upon the belief system, ethics, and attitude of the society toward religion and its transcendental aspects. While the debate over what constitutes genuine evidence for these phenomena is still raging, there is no question of the importance and influence of religion on human history, spirit, and individual change. These religious experiences, irrespective of the scrutiny they attract, will always have value and meaning around the intersection of faith and logic.

7. CONCLUSION

The religious experience is marked by a self-sustaining reality of transforming nature that is capable of renewing individuals, their faiths,

religions, and even societies. In various periods, people have claimed that they have first-hand engagement with a world above our normal existence. These engagements have always been termed as self-proving and capable of transforming the individual fundamentally. Throughout history, believers have claimed to have witnessed mystical visions and numinous phenomena, such as the ordinary known phenomenon of conversion and communal religious revival, as being the surest testimony of God as well as the reality. However, what is still under wraps is the question of their epistemic reality because they are subjective, culturally bound, and perhaps scientific phenomena as well. An individual divine meeting which constitutes a religious experience contrasts religion with belief. It offers self-justifying faith which requires power. Unlike reality or culture, such beliefs are subjective and science attempts to generalize them all. An open debate remains regarding the question of whether singular experiences actually indicate an external "God" or divine reality or not. The answer to this question resides in Philosophy, Science, or Theology. Though problematic, such experiences renew individual beliefs and traditional ethics in society. They are regarded not only as meaningful psychological events but also as profound encounters with higher powers, thus deeply shaping humanity. The concept of ideology, religion, and human belief has strongly aided the pursuit of meaning; also, the concept of humanity must encompass religious experiences, which are grounded in the nature of a person's experience, perception, and explanation, as well as philosophical belief.

References

- Alvis, J. W. (2017). Anthony J. Steinbock: Phenomenology & Mysticism: The Verticality of Religious Experience: Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2007, 2009, 309 pp, \$44.95. In: Springer.
- Avnur, Y. (2024). Pascal's birds: Signs and significance in nature. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 108(1), 3-20.
- Baldwin, R. (2024). Predictive Processing and the Post-Resurrection Christophanies and Angelophanies: Implications for Psychological Interpretations of the Resurrection of Jesus. *Theology and Science*, 1-18.
- Boals, A., Jayawickreme, E., & Park, C. L. (2023). Advantages of distinguishing perceived and veridical growth: recommendations for future research on both constructs. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 18(5), 773-783.
- Camina, E., Bernacer, J., & Guell, F. (2021). Belief operationalization for empirical research in psychological sciences. *Foundations of Science*, 26(2), 325-340.
- Chilcott, T. (2024). Making Sense of Early Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Mystical Theology: A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Study of History and Mysticism. *Philosophy East and West*.

- Cian, L. (2017). Verticality and conceptual metaphors: A systematic review. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 2(4), 444-459.
- Gäb, S. (2021). Mysticism without concepts. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 90(3), 233-246.
- Galen, L. W. (2012). Does religious belief promote prosociality? A critical examination. *Psychological bulletin*, 138(5), 876.
- Garb, B. A., & Earleywine, M. (2022). Mystical experiences without mysticism: an argument for mystical fictionalism in psychedelics. *Journal of Psychedelic Studies*.
- Gładziejewski, P. (2023). From altered states to metaphysics: the epistemic status of psychedelic-induced metaphysical beliefs. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 1-23.
- Govind Krishnan, V. Is Religion Rational?: Science, Evidence, and Objectivity1.
- Johnson, M. K. (2024). Reflecting on the origins of subjective experience. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 76.
- Kizito, O. I., & Abakare, C. O. (2022). A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH TO MYSTICISM IN THE LIGHT OF WILLIAM JAMES VIEW ON MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES. *NNAMDI AZIKIWE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY*, 13(1).
- Klassen, R. M. (2004). A cross-cultural investigation of the efficacy beliefs of South Asian immigrant and Anglo Canadian nonimmigrant early adolescents. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96(4), 731.
- Launonen, L. (2024). Hearing God speak? Debunking arguments and everyday religious experiences. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 95(2), 187-203.
- Letheby, C., Mattu, J., & Hochstein, E. (2024). How to End the Mysticism Wars in Psychedelic Science. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Philosophy and Psychoactive Drug Use* (pp. 127-154). Springer.
- Lorkowski, C., & Lorkowski, C. (2021). Challenges to Religious Experience. *Atheism Considered: A Survey of the Rational Rejection of Religious Belief*, 157-165.
- Marshall, P. (2022). Does mystical experience give access to reality? *Religions*, 13(10), 983.
- McCutcheon, R. (1999). The insider/outsider problem in the study of religion. *The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, 1-416.
- Meier, B. P., Hauser, D. J., Robinson, M. D., Friesen, C. K., & Schjeldahl, K. (2007). What's "up" with God? Vertical space as a representation of the divine. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 93(5), 699.
- Morales, J. (2021). The Ecology of Religious Knowledges. *Religions*, 13(1), 11.
- Munro, D. (2024). Remembering religious experience: Reconstruction, reflection, and reliability. *Philosophy and the Mind Sciences*, 5.
- Obi, C. (2022). Moralizing the relationship between religious experience and the Nigerian society. *UNIZIK Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 14(1), 224-247.
- Oshinowo, O. O. (2023). NEUROTHEOLOGY: A PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK OF THE ISSUE OF APOTHEOSIS. *AKWA IBOM STATE UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF ARTS*, 4(1).
- Paloutzian, R. F., & Park, C. L. (2021). The psychology of religion and spirituality: How big the tent? *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 13(1), 3.

- Pleket, H. W. (1981). Religious History as the History of Mentality: the 'Believer' as Servant of the Deity in the Greek World. In *Faith, hope and worship* (pp. 152-192). Brill.
- Ritchie, S. L. (2021). Panpsychism and spiritual flourishing: Constructive engagement with the new science of psychedelics. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 28(9-10), 268-288.
- Scrutton, A. P. (2023). A Conjunctive Explanation about Psychopathology? Hearing Voices, Psychosis and Religious Experience. In *Conjunctive Explanations in Science and Religion* (pp. 171-189). Routledge.
- Shushan, G. (2024). Diversity and similarity of near-death experiences across cultures and history: implications for the survival hypothesis. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 1-7.
- Smart, N. (1996). *Dimensions of the sacred: An anatomy of the world's beliefs*. Univ of California Press.
- Steinbock, A. J. (2009). *Phenomenology and mysticism: The verticality of religious experience*. Indiana University Press.
- Stepanenko, W. S. (2021). The Epistemic Parity of Religious-Apologetic and Religion-Debunking Responses to the Cognitive Science of Religion. *Religions*, 12(7), 466.
- Tanyi, R. A. (2002). Towards clarification of the meaning of spirituality. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 39(5), 500-509.
- Wingert, J. R., Bassett, G. M., Terry, C. E., Cheng, K., & Lee, J. (2023). The effects of religious views and creationism on teleological reasoning, acceptance and understanding of natural selection: a preliminary mixed-methods study. *Evolution: Education and Outreach*, 16(1), 10.